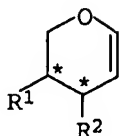We claim:

1. A chiral compound of the general formula I

5

(I)

10

and diastereomers thereof, where

15   R^1 and R^2, independently of one another, are
        $P-Y^1-A^1-Y^2-M-Y^3-(A^2)_m-Y^4-$ groups,

        where

20   A^1 and A^2 are spacers having from one to 30 carbon atoms,

        M   is a mesogenic group,

        Y^1, Y^2, Y^3 and Y^4 are a single chemical bond, -O-, -S-, -CO-,
25   -CO-O-, -O-CO-, -CO-N(R)-, -(R)N-CO-, -O-CO-O-,
             -O-CO-N(R)-, -(R)N-CO-O- or -(R)N-CO-N(R)-,

        R   is hydrogen or C_1-C_4-alkyl,

30   P   is hydrogen, C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, a group which is polymerizable
             or suitable for polymerization, or a radical which
             carries a group which is polymerizable or suitable for
             polymerization, and

35   m   is a value of 0 or 1,

        where the variables A^1, A^2, Y^1, Y^2, Y^3, Y^4, M, P and the index
        m in the groups R^1 and R^2 may be identical or different, with
        the proviso that, in the case where the index m is 0, at
40   least one of the variables Y^3 and Y^4 adjacent to A^2 is a
        chemical bond.

45

2. A compound as claimed in claim 1, where the mesogenic group M
conforms to the formula Ia

$$(-T-Y^5)_r-T- \qquad (Ia)$$

5

where

T   is a divalent saturated or unsaturated carbocyclic or
heterocyclic radical,

10

Y^5 is a single chemical bond, $-O-$, $-S-$, $-CO-$, $-CO-O-$,
$-O-CO-$, $-CO-N(R)-$, $-(R)N-CO-$, $-O-CO-O-$, $-O-CO-N(R)-$,
$-(R)N-CO-O-$ or $-(R)N-CO-N(R)-$,

15   R   is hydrogen or C_1-C_4-alkyl and

r   is a value of 0, 1, 2 or 3, where, for r > 0, both the
variables T and the variables Y^5 may in each case be
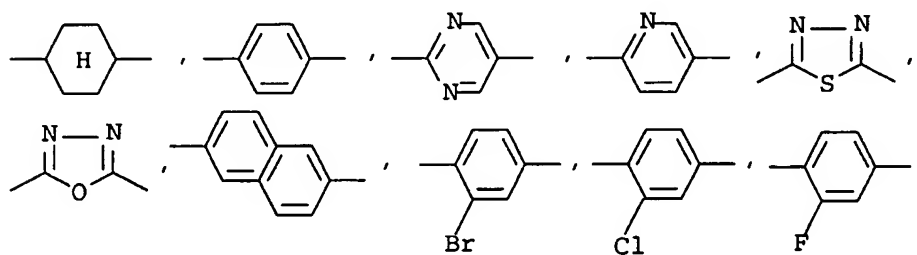identical to or different from one another.

20

3. A compound as claimed in claim 2, where the index r in the
mesogenic group of the formula Ia in the groups R^1 and R^2
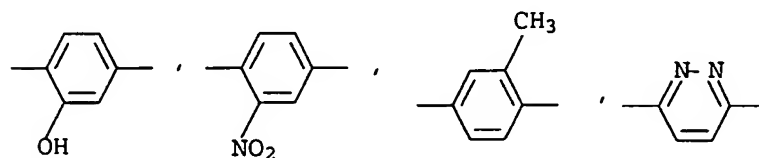adopts, independently of one another, the value 0 or 1.

25 4. A compound as claimed in claim 2 or 3, where T is selected
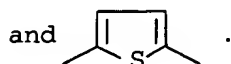from the group consisting of

5. A compound as claimed in one or more of claims 1 to 4, where,
in the groups R^1 and R^2, m is in each case 0, Y^3 is a single
45   chemical bond, and Y^4 corresponds to $-O-$, $-CO-O-$, $-O-CO-O-$ or

$-(R)N-CO-O-$, where the variables Y^4 may be identical to or different from one another.

6. The use of a compound as claimed in one or more of claims 1 to 5 as chiral dopant for liquid-crystalline systems.

7. A liquid-crystalline composition comprising at least one chiral compound of the general formula I as claimed in one or more of claims 1 to 5.

8. A polymerizable liquid-crystalline composition comprising at least one chiral compound of the general formula I as claimed in one or more of claims 1 to 5.

9. The use of a composition as claimed in claim 7 or 8 for the production of optical components.

10. An optical component which has been produced using a composition as claimed in claim 7 or 8.

11. The use of a composition as claimed in claim 8 for printing or coating substrates.

12. A printed or coated substrate which has been produced using a composition as claimed in claim 8.

13. The use of a composition as claimed in claim 8 for the preparation of dispersions and emulsions.

14. A dispersion or emulsion which has been prepared using a composition as claimed in claim 8.

15. The use of a composition as claimed in claim 8 for the production of films.

16. A film which has been produced using a composition as claimed in claim 8.

17. The use of a composition as claimed in claim 8 for the preparation of pigments.

18. A pigment which has been prepared using a composition as claimed in claim 8.